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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/20/2010
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MCA](#) [P](#) [IZ](#) [AE](#)
SUBJECT: UAE LEADERS DISCUSS REGIONAL SECURITY AHEAD OF
DUBAI AIR SHOW

Classified By: Martin R. Quinn, DCM, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) Summary: The 9th Dubai Air Show got under way November 20 with the UAE leadership underscoring the UAE's role in defusing regional tension by promoting dialogue and condemning terrorism, and at the same time stressing the importance of modernizing the military to safeguard the UAE's national interests. The leadership also called for a UN-led initiative to rid the Middle East of Weapons of Mass Destruction, and reiterated its support for Iraq. End Summary.

12. (U) Speaking November 19 before the Middle East Air Chiefs Conference, the event that traditionally precedes the Dubai Air Show, Sheikh Ahmed bin Said Al Maktoum, head of the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority and chairman of Emirates Air, also talked about the UAE's role in conflict resolution. The UAE, in keeping with the late President Sheikh Zayed's principles, "favors the peaceful resolution to conflicts," said Sheikh Ahmed, who was filling in for Dubai Crown Prince and Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid (MbR). He said that conflict has spread in the region, as have acts of terrorism. The UAE has been consistent in its condemnation of "indiscriminate attacks" against innocent women and children, he said. Sheikh Ahmed said that war was not the only way to solve conflicts. The UAE supports international community efforts to eliminate injustice and inequality, especially in the case of the Palestinians. He said the UAE also supports the establishment of a WMD-free zone in the region. The UAE also supports building a free and united Iraq, Sheikh Ahmed

told the air chiefs. The UAE has also supported a policy on national security that emphasizes strong security services and armed forces. This has created an atmosphere that is encouraging multinational corporations to invest in the UAE, he added. The UAE's economic growth is testimony to the "right policies" at all levels, he said. At the same time, the UAE is "staying alert" to potential threats to its security, Sheikh Ahmed concluded.

¶3. (U) Abu Dhabi Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed (MbZ), told Dir Al Watan, the magazine of the UAE Armed Forces, that the UAE is capable of playing a major role in defusing tensions in the region through its policy of promoting dialogue as a means of resolving conflicts. He also said that the UAE strategy to modernize its armed forces is part of an overall policy to boost the defense capabilities of the country by acquiring the most sophisticated arms, including 80 F-16 Block 60 jet fighters from the United States. "By possessing these jets, we have acquired a decisive force and therefore we stand ready to ward off any threats against us. It means that we have secured our airspace and also elevated the capacity of our military to the same level as that of other advanced armies of the world," MbZ said. MbZ noted, however, that "at no time has the UAE been a source of threat to any country. We do not harbor any sinister intention against anyone." He said the UAE is modernizing its military "to beef up our national security" and safeguard the national interest. "A strong UAE military will reinforce regional and global peace and stability," he added.

¶4. (U) Separately, Dubai Crown Prince MbR told Dir Al Watan magazine that the UAE has called for a UN-led effort to eliminate WMD from the Middle East. MbR said the initiative should be "balanced and just" and "without bias and double standards." He warned that WMD, if exploited, could be destructive. "The WMD pose a real danger not only to their possessors but also to the surrounding region and the whole world at large ... they are a source of worry to peace and stability and it is better for states acquiring them to take the lead in getting rid of them to protect humanity."

¶5. (C) Comment: Sheikh Ahmed's keynote address to the Middle East Air Chiefs Conference had less to do with the theme of the event)- "Modern Air Power: Strategy and Tactics")- and more to do with the UAE's political agenda of condemning terrorism, supporting Iraq's reconstruction and political process, and standing by the Palestinian cause. As such, it got the attention of senior air force officers from the U.S., several European and Asian countries, and the Middle East.

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